The New School at West Heath

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Coordinates: 51°15′18″N 0°11′10″E

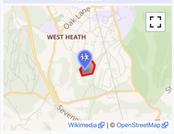
West Heath School is an independent school in Sevenoaks, Kent. It caters for children for whom mainstream schooling has become insufficient, for varying reasons. The school's motto is "Rebuilding Lives Through Education."

The school, founded in its current form as a charitable trust on 14 September 1998 as the Beth Marie Centre, is based in 31 acres (13 ha) of parkland on lease from Mohamed Al-Fayed, who contributed almost £3 million towards the school. The building formerly housed West Heath Girls' School, a girls' school with around 100 boarding pupils, established in 1865 and closed in 1997.

Contents [hide]
1 History and grounds
2 Management
3 General information
3.1 Statistics
3.1.1 2005
3.1.2 2004
3.1.3 2003
3.1.4 2002
3.1.5 2000
3.1.6 1999
4 Post 16
5 Fund a Child's Education (FaCE)
6 Controversy
7 References
8 External links

West Heath School

Address



Ashgrove Road
Sevenoaks, Kent, TN13 1SR
England

Coordinates 51°15′18″N 0°11′10″E

Information	
Motto	"Rebuilding Lives Through Education"
Established	1998[1]
Principal, CEO	Mrs Photini Bohacek
Website	http://westheathschool.com/

History and grounds [edit source]

Main article: West Heath Girls' School

The school occupies premises formerly occupied by West Heath Girls' School, a private school founded in London in 1865, and which moved to this site, the 18th-century Ashgrove House, in 1932. Pupils included (from 1974 to 1977) Diana Spencer, the future Princess of Wales. In the 1990s the school began to experience financial difficulties owing to falling pupil numbers, and it was placed into receivership in 1997.

The Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund considered buying the school, but decided against it, and Mohamed Al Fayed stepped in to buy West Heath for £2,300,000 on 20 May 1998 as new premises for the Beth Marie Centre. He later pledged to contribute a further £550,000 towards equipping the school. In a statement, he said:

> I am surprised that the Princess Diana Memorial Fund, with all its millions in the bank, did not show a greater interest in this project. I believe it to be a far more fitting tribute to her work than putting her name on tasteless souvenirs.[1]

The school was founded in its current form, as The New School at West Heath, with Valerie May as Principal, on 14 September 1998. At the start it had around 30 pupils. Boarding began in the year 2000, and there are six boarding houses, each named after one of the trustees (see "Management", below); Tarrant, Sissons, Astor, Ruth, Hunniford and Esther.

An additional, more modern, teaching block was built to increase the classroom capacity and overall space for the school.

The entertainer and singer Madonna, who visited the school in 2010, has funded the educational progression through it of one pupil (who has been kept anonymous).

The school was renamed as West Heath School in September 2015.[2]

Management [edit source]

Founding patron: Mohamed Al-Fayed

The school is governed by a board of 10 Trustees

School management:

- Principal: Photini Bohacek
- Head of Education (school): Rob Walton
- Head of Boarding: Tracey Goodland
- Head of Post-16 (school support at colleges): Rhiannon Easton

General information [edit source]

Policy, syllabuses, schemes of work and National Curriculum documents can be made available on request to the Head of Education.

- Criteria for pupils: 11 to 19 years old, female or male.

Disabilities which pupils may have include: acute stress disorder, addiction, affective spectrum, agoraphobia, anorexia nervosa, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD/ADD), autism spectrum/high functioning autism, avoidant personality disorder, bipolar disorder, bulimia nervosa, conduct disorder, developmental delay, clinical depression, dyslexia, developmental coordination disorder, epilepsy, exhibitionism, genetic disorders, hysteria, nervous breakdown, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), obsessive-compulsive personality disorder (OCPD), oppositional defiant disorder, (ODD), general anxiety disorder (GAD), impulse control disorder (kleptomania, intermittent explosive disorder, pyromania, pathological gambling, trichotillomania), emotional or behavioural difficulties, pathological demand avoidance (PDA), panic attacks, pervasive developmental disorder (PDD), seasonal affective disorder (SAD), self-harm (SH), separation anxiety disorder/school refusal, selective mutism, semantic pragmatic disorder, social anxiety (social phobia), Tourette syndrome, Transgender and other various mental health problems.

Many of the disadvantaged pupils have not had the opportunity to get a formal Statement of Special Needs (SSEN) for various reasons.

- Costs – £15,790 p/a (per annum) for day pupils, £42,972 p/a for residential (boarding) pupils.
- Class size – 10 maximum.
- Funding – The school does not have state school status; however it is indirectly funded through the Local Education Authorities (LEAs) of individual pupils, Social Services, Health authorities, bursary or self-funded. Each pupil has an annual review each year to determine if their needs are being met and what changes if any need to be made in their education. Recently,[*when?*] the school had to cut back hard on funding due to a decrease in charity donations. Al-Fayed ceased funding the school.

It received some money from Children in Need in 2004, and teachers and pupils also partook in fund-raising activities for Children in Need as a whole, for example sponsored silences, head shaves, makeup-for-the-day and so on.

- Entry – Entering the school requires a Local Education Authority procedure or Social Services referral, as the school has the status as a Special School.
- Number of pupils – 101

Statistics [edit source]

2005 [edit source]

GCSE grades:

- Unpublished

2004 [edit source]

GCSE grades:[3]

- Number of pupils aged 15: 20
- Pupils achieving 5 or more GCSE passes (A*–C): 0%
- Pupils failing to achieve at least *one* entry level qualification: 20%
- Average total GCSE point score per 15-year-old: 121.3 (for comparison, the nearest non-Special Educational Needs school, Sevenoaks School: 498.2)

2003 [edit source]

GCSE grades:[4]

- Number of pupils: 31
- Pupils aged 16 achieving 5 or more GCSE grades A*–G: 89% *(unpublished which of this is passes, e.g. A*–C)*
- Average total point score per 16-year-old: 23.8 (for comparison, the nearest non-SEN school, Sevenoaks School average: 66.8)
- Pupils with Special Educational Needs: 100%

2002 [edit source]

Key Stage 3 tests[5] *(not GCSE)*:

- % pupils achieving level 5 or above in English test: 0%
- % pupils achieving level 5 or above in Maths test: 22%
- % pupils achieving level 5 or above in Science test: 0%
- % 15-year-olds achieving 5 or more grades A*–C: 4%
  - 1998–2002 *decrease* in % of 15-year-olds getting 5 or more A*–C: 17%
- % 15-year-olds achieving 5 or more grades D–G: 32%
- % 15-year-olds failing to achieve at least 5 G grades: 64%

2000 [edit source]

GCSE grades:[6]

- Pupils achieving 5 or more GCSE grades A*–C: 33%
- Pupils failing to achieve at least 5 GCSE passes: 67%
- Pupils failing to achieve *any* GCSE passes: 17%
- Pupils with Special Educational Needs: 100%
- Pupils with SEN with statements: 61.9%
- Pupils with SEN without statements: 38.1%
- Number of pupils: 42

1999 [edit source]

GCSE grades:[4]

- Pupils achieving 5 or more GCSE grades A*–C: 21%
- Pupils failing to achieve at least 5 GCSE passes: 79%
- Pupils failing to achieve *any* GCSE passes: 11%[3]

Post 16 [edit source]

As well as teaching pupils from Years 7 to 11, the school operates a section allowing pupils to get "support" from the school while going to college; the school itself does not have staff to teach subjects at A-level. Many continue boarding at the school while going to college elsewhere.

Fund a Child's Education (FaCE) [edit source]

The New School has set up a fundraising drive, FaCE (Fund a Child's Education) to enable it to help children in need of the school to move from its very large waiting list of potential pupils.

Controversy [edit source]

Co-founder and vice-principal William Whillock (who was also the school's designated child protection officer) was outed as a sex offender in 2011. The female victim, a pupil at the school, was aged 16–17, while Whillock was 57. He had exchanged flirtatious text messages with the victim, and had obtained indecent photos from her: 14 were found on his mobile phone. Whillock was immediately suspended from his position, and was subsequently sentenced to a three-year community order.[7]

References [edit source]

1. ^ a b "Mohamed Al Fayed buys Diana's former school". 21 May 1998. Archived from the original on 3 March 2008. Retrieved 5 November 2010.
2. ^ Ofsted (2017). *West Heath School: School and residential report*. p. 11. Retrieved 7 July 2020. "Trustees agreed to change the school's name from The New School at West Heath to its present name from September 2015."
3. ^ a b Secondary Schools 2004 Archived 10 March 2005 at the Wayback Machine
4. ^ a b Kent | Special Reports | EducationGuardian.co.uk
5. ^ EducationGuardian.co.uk | Interactive guides | Kent
6. ^ "Archived copy". Archived from the original on 16 July 2004. Retrieved 11 December 2005.
7. ^ "Community order for teacher over child porn offence". *The Independent*. 21 May 2010. Retrieved 11 December 2020.

External links [edit source]

- Official website
- The New School at West Heath, Ofsted social care inspection reports
- The New School at West Heath, Ofsted independent school inspection reports
- *The New School at West Heath* on *Independent Schools of the British Isles*
- Article mentioning the school on BBC News Online, September 2003
- Information about the school previously on Al-Fayed's website (last available archived version, 17 May 2006)
- West Heath Tennis Centre, which takes place on the schools facilities when not in use for additional funding.

v · t · e **Schools in Kent** (including Medway) [show]
v · t · e **Diana, Princess of Wales** [show]

Categories: Independent schools in Kent | Special schools in Kent | Astor family | Boarding schools in Kent | Educational institutions established in 1998 | Memorials to Diana, Princess of Wales | 1998 establishments in England | Schools in Sevenoaks

Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License; additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the Terms of Use and Privacy Policy. Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., a non-profit organization.